

Mr. Teal will always be remembered by his friends, family and loved ones and will surely be honored by the entire constituency of the Dallas/Forth Worth Metroplex community for his bravery and heroism.

Our hearts go out to all of the families who have lost a loved one. I also hope and pray for the safe and quick return of our Prisoners of War and all members of U.S. Armed Forces engaged in overseas conflicts.

Mr. Speaker, I join with this House and with the people of Dallas/Forth Worth Metroplex and Americans all across the country in declaring our unequivocal support for the brave young men and women in the Persian Gulf.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 95) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2004 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2003 and 2005 through 2013:

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my strong opposition to the Fiscal Year 2004 budget resolution.

The Republican budget is completely divorced from reality, and operates under the fantasy that our country can afford a tax cut of \$1.35 trillion as the United States embarks upon a necessary mission to liberate Iraq. The attempt to proceed with new tax cuts during a time of war is without precedent in American history, and for good reason; past administrations and Congresses have understood that our country cannot have its cake and eat it too. The Republican budget resolution does not take into account our country's current economic and military situations, and is stubbornly stuck in the past. The majority's efforts to pile new tax cut upon new tax cut are not without costs or consequences, and many groups in our society and in my district in East Texas will pay for these efforts.

In their attempts to provide new tax cuts while simultaneously balancing the budget, the majority will succeed only in balancing the budget on the backs of our Nation's senior citizens, veterans, students, farmers, and economically disadvantaged. How the majority can propose spending cuts in veterans' health care during a time of war is beyond me, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Paralyzed Veterans of America share my amazement at that effort.

Further, Chairman NUSSLE's original FY04 budget required nearly every authorizing committee to cut 1 percent in spending from last year's levels. The reconciliation instructions to the House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce committees would have resulted in cuts of \$260 billion and \$110 billion, respectively, over the next decade. These draconian cuts would have drained funds from both Medicare and Medicaid, and would have balanced the budget at the expense of seniors and the poor.

The original Republican budget was so harmful and irresponsible that it had to be changed before it came to floor for consideration. Yet even after the Republicans "improved" their budget, the majority required spending cuts of \$169 billion, with much of that total being slashed from the federal government's share of Medicaid funding. These required cuts are outrageous, and undermine the majority's persistent claims of pursuing an agenda of compassionate conservatism.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that tax relief is important, and I have supported the president's efforts to cut taxes in the past. I was one of only 28 House Democrats who voted for the president's \$1.35 trillion tax cut package in May 2001, and one of only 9 House Democrats to support an effort to make these cuts permanent. Since the time of those votes, however, our economy and fiscal situations have deteriorated significantly, and the United States is now engaged in a potentially lengthy and costly war. Our country simply cannot afford to press ahead with the effort to pass new tax cuts, totaling \$726 billion, on top of the continuing effort to make the president's 2001 tax cuts permanent.

I am pleased that the Rules Committee made in order the Blue Dog budget alternative, and I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to take this opportunity to support a responsible budget. By allowing the Blue Dogs to offer our budget substitute, the Republican leadership has finally acknowledged that the House needs to have an honest debate on a sensible alternative to the majority's unrealistic and irresponsible budget resolution.

The Blue Dog substitute will balance the federal budget in ten years without relying on the Social Security surplus and without sacrificing our nation's veterans and seniors for new tax cuts. At the same time, the Blue Dogs provide both immediate and long-term tax relief to American taxpayers. This tax relief consists largely of an acceleration of cuts already scheduled under current law, with the exception of rate cuts in the top two marginal brackets. It is both reasonable and necessary to defer reductions in the top two upper brackets until the costs of our current war effort are paid for and the federal budget is back in balance.

Further, the Blue Dogs are committed to sticking with the president's overall funding levels for defense and non-defense discretionary spending. I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join the Blue Dogs in our support of the president's total funding levels, and I urge every member of the House to support the reasonable, responsible Blue Dog budget alternative.

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK NORRIS

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay special tribute to a true American patriot and civic leader from Oregon's Second Congressional District. Mr. Chuck Norris has served his country honorably in the United States Army, his State in the Oregon State Legislature, and his

community as a volunteer in many capacities. His dedicated spirit and devotion to his fellow citizens has been his most enduring trait over the years, and I'm proud to call Chuck and his wonderful wife, Betty Lou, my friends.

Chuck Norris was born in Pasadena, California, in 1925. Shortly after his birth Chuck's family moved to a 160-acre farm in east-central Kansas, where he was raised. In July of 1943, following his graduation from high school, Chuck left Kansas and the family farm to serve our country as an officer in the U.S. Army. After his commissioning as a 2nd Lieutenant, Chuck was stationed around the globe, from Japan and Turkey to Germany and Vietnam. He commanded a platoon, company, and battalion before being stationed in Umatilla, Oregon, where he served as the commander of the Umatilla Army Depot. During Chuck's service he attended the Army Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Industrial College and the Executive Program of the University of Chicago.

In times of crisis the soldier is revered by one and all, but quickly forgotten about when danger passes. Today as we find ourselves at war and we shower our troops with well-deserved praise, we would do well to also remember the men like Chuck Norris who quietly and stoically served our country in uniform and protected our freedom with little thanks in return.

In 1971, Chuck Norris retired from the Army, but not from public service. In 1986 Chuck was elected to the Oregon State Legislature, where he represented the people of eastern Oregon for five terms. Among his many accomplishments was his effectiveness in shaping natural resource policies, especially water management. As Chairman of the House Committee on Water Policy, Chuck crafted legislation creating voluntary local watershed councils across the State, providing local citizens an opportunity to work with one another in managing and preserving Oregon's many watersheds. As everyone who hails from a Western State understands, where I come from water is among the most precious commodities. Those who help us conserve water and put it to wise uses are particularly deserving of our praise and gratitude.

Following retirement from the State Legislature, Chuck Norris continued his distinguished career of public service and his devotion to improving the way we use our natural resources in eastern Oregon. As a volunteer and member of the Umatilla Watershed Council and as an advisor to the Oregon Water Coalition, he selflessly devoted his time and energy to helping his fellow Oregonians. Since I have served in the U.S. House, Chuck has also taken the time to keep me informed about issues of concern on the ground in eastern Oregon and I value the input he offers. I would like to extend my personal thanks to Chuck for all that he has done for the people of Umatilla County, the Second District, the State of Oregon and the United States.

Holding true to his proud role as a father and grandfather, Chuck and Betty Lou, his wife of 57 years, are about to embark permanently to Florida to be with their children and grandchildren. Countless eastern Oregonians will miss them, but will always count them as lifelong friends.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in saluting Chuck Norris, an extraordinary man and great American. I wish Chuck and Betty Lou the very best in the years ahead.